

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE F-10

WASHINGTON POST
11 July 1984

JACK ANDERSON

CIA Is Assailed On Aid to Foes Of Nicaragua

The CIA has a unique capacity to rise up and create a fiasco. A decade ago, it recruited some obscure tribesmen to fight its covert battles in Laos and Iraq, then abandoned them to be slaughtered. Now a similar catastrophe is in the making in Nicaragua.

In an earlier column I told how the CIA armed the Creoles and Indians in Nicaragua, provoked them to attack the Sandinista regime, then cut off their supplies.

They will soon be without weapons to defend themselves against a remorseless enemy.

My roving reporter, Jon Lee Anderson, is now traveling with the Misura guerrillas—a coalition of Miskito, Suma and Rama Indians—along Nicaragua's swampy Atlantic coast.

He reports that their situation is critical.

Their leader is Steadman Fagoth, a small, wiry man with curly black hair that tumbles over a bald spot. He yearns for the quiet, contemplative life of the marine biologist he studied to be.

Yet he is a tough guerrilla chief, and his manner conveys authority.

"The gringos have cut off all their aid to us," he told my reporter in Spanish. "They say it's because they don't have any more money, but I think it's because we're 'naughty children.'"

Fagoth meant that the Indians have resisted the CIA's efforts to force them into what he considers an unholy alliance with the contras, who are led by former officers of the late dictator Anastasio Somoza's hated national guard.

Fagoth also says the CIA aid ought to be out in the open.

"Everyone knows about it and who it's for, so why call it covert?" he demanded. "I will ask for it to be sent directly to us from Congress. I want to see American C130s unloading our supplies in the open. As long as it's covert, it allows corrupt middlemen to fill their pockets."

Fagoth said his forces had received arms from the CIA, plus a monthly allotment of \$80,000 to pay for food, clothing, fuel for their boats and other expenses.

"It was never enough money," he said.

Last month, the CIA sent them nothing at all and informed them that no more aid would be available. The 30-year-old Indian leader says his determination to remain independent of CIA control is what caused the cutoff.

"The CIA has wanted to be the owner of the anti-Sandinista move-

ment," he said. "They are wrong if they think they can buy our movement with their money."

The CIA's malign neglect could pass an invisible sentence upon the Indians.

If agency officials had pondered their decision with a little intelligence and compassion, they would realize that the cost will be high in Indian lives.

The Sandinistas have already started to herd the Indians into "relocation camps" and to wipe out any who resist.

"We'll put up our blood," said Fagoth, "but the gringos must put up the cash."

Footnote: A year ago, my reporter Anderson made a foray into Nicaragua with the Indians.

They complained bitterly to him that both the Honduran army and the CIA's Somoza-tainted guerrillas were taking a cut of their supplies.

I reported this in my column and it caused some unpleasant repercussions.

When the Misura commanders returned to Honduras, they were thrown into jail for having talked to my reporter, and Honduran authorities tried to run the Indians out of the country.

But the publicity caused the CIA to make sure the Misura forces got their supplies, which have now been abruptly cut off.